

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 ACDA-05 IO-11 AF-06

OPIC-03 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 OMB-01

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 CU-02 OES-03 /106 W

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P R 161741Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6392

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE CARDINAL SPEAKS

REF: LISBON 1690

SUMMARY: THE CARDINAL PATRIARCH ENDED A LONG PERIOD OF
OFFICIAL SILENCE WITH HIS FIRST PUBLIC INTERVIEW SINCE APRIL 74.
WHILE HE MAINTAINED HIS HABITUAL CAUTION, THE HIERARCH CONTINUES
TO EMERGE FROM ITS EARLIER DEFENSIVE POSTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. CARDINAL SPEAKS: DOM ANTONIO RIBEIRO, CARDINAL
PATRIARCH OF PORTUGAL GRANTED RARE PUBLIC INTERVIEW TO
MARCH 16 "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS." THE CARDINAL MADE FOL-
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LOWING POINTS:

-- THE CHURCH ACCEPTS THE NON-DENOMINATIONAL STATE, BUT OPPOSES THE ANTI-HUMANISTIC NATURE OF TOTALITARIAN OR ATHEISTIC STATES.

-- THE CHURCH WELCOMES THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION'S EMPHASIS ON LIBERTY, FRATERNITY, AND PEACE WHILE DISAPPROVING PARTISAN MANIPULATIONS. THE CHURCH SUPPORTS ALL EFFORTS TO HELP THE LEAST PRIVILEGED, BUT MAINTAINS ITS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF PROPAGATING THE FAITH.

-- PRIESTS WHO ARE THE LEADING FIGURES IN THEIR SMALL TOWNS HAVE A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO EXPLAIN EVENTS FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, THESE PRIESTS OUGHT NOT ASSUME PARTISAN POSITIONS.

-- THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHY PRODUCED MANY ABUSES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INCLUDING THE OCCUPATION OF TWENTY SMALL PROPERTIES OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOUTH AS LATE AS JANUARY 1976. THE DECISION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ON PRIVATE EDUCATION. AND GOVERNMENTAL DECREES INTEGRATING HOLY HOUSES OF MERCY INTO THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ALSO ABUSE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

-- "CATHOLIC ACTION" HAS UNDERGONE A CRISIS IN THE LAST TEN YEARS WHICH HAS ONLY BEEN OVERCOME IN A FEW BRANCHES OF THAT ORGANIZATION.

-- RETURNING PRIESTS FROM FORMER AFRICAN COLONIES ARE NOT A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO THE SHORTAGE OF CLERGY. INSTEAD, THE USE OF MORE LAY ASSISTANTS AND THE VERY RECENT REVIVAL OF RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS WILL PROVIDE FOR RELIGIOUS NEEDS.

-- DISSENT WITHIN THE CHURCH IS HEALTHY EXCEPT TO THE DEGREE THAT IT CAUSES POLARIZATION.

2. RC MEETS: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) MET MARCH 15 IN A SPECIAL SESSION WITH A SECRET AGENDA. (COMMENT: EMBASSY INFORMED THAT LABOR PROBLEMS WERE MAIN ITEM - REFTEL). RC SPOKESMAN, CPT SOUSA E CASTRO, SAID THAT THE "OPEN BATTLE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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WORDS" BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. RC AGREED TO GUARANTEE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER AND RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. RC ALSO:

-- HEARD PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO'S ACCOUNT OF HIS DECISION NOT TO ATTEND THE SOCIALIST SUMMIT; AND

-- REVIEWED NOV 25 REPORT.

3.# TRAVELS:

-- MELO ANTUNES: FONMIN MELO ANTUNES RETURNED MARCH 16 FROM HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO POLAND WHERE HE SIGNED A PROTOCOL FOR BILATERAL CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION.

-- SALGADO ZENHA: FINANCE MPNISTER SALGADO ZENHA DEPARTED MARCH 15 FOR WASHINGTON ACCOMPANIED BY BUDGET SECRETARY VICTOR CONSTANCIO AND BANK OF PORTUGAL GOVERNOR DR. SILVA LOPES.

-- SOARES: MARIO SOARES LEFT MARCH 15 FOR PARIS AND LUXEMBOURG. IN PARIS, HE WILL PROMOTE HIS NEW BOOK ON THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION AND MEET WITH EMIGRANTS AND MEDIA. IN LUXEMBOURG HE WILL MEET WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

4. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: NORTHERN MILITARY REGION COMMANDER BG PIRES VELOSO WAS GIVEN A MAJOR BOOST FOR THE PRESIDENCY WHEN SOCIALIST LEADER SALGADA ZENHA TOLD SOCIALIST EUROPEAN SUMMIT IN OPORTO LAST WEEKEND THAT PS WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO VELOSO'S CANDIDACY. LTC FERMINO MIGUEL, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO ARMY CHIEF EANES, COMMENTED TO DCM AND DATT MARCH 15 THAT VELOSO WAS VERY ACCEPTABLE TO HIM AND THE "MEN OF NOV 25."

5. COMMENT: THE CARDINAL'S INTERVIEW IS HIS FIRST WITH THE PORTUGUESE MEDIA SINCE APRIL 74 COUP. HIS CARE IN ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, EVEN THOSE OF PAROCHIAL CONCERN, IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS GENERALLY CAUTIOUS APPROACH. NONETHELESS, THE INTERVIEW INDICATES THAT THE CHURCH HIERARCHY CONTINUES TO EMERGE FROM ITS EARLIER DEFENSIVE POSTURE.
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THE CARDINAL'S DISCLAIMERS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE VIEWS OF INDIVIDUAL PARISH PRIESTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONSERVATIVE RURAL NORTH, WILL INFLUENCE MANY VOTERS.
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